DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 366 265 HE 027 107

TITLE Role of Higher Education in Promoting Education for All.

INSTITUTION United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Bangkok (Thailand). Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific.

PUB DATE 92

NOTE 85p.; Summary of the Regional Conference (Bangkok, Thailand, December 10-14, 1990).

PUB TYPE Reports - General (140)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education; Agency Cooperation; Curriculum Development; Developing Nations; Distance Education; Educational Demand; Educational Improvement; *Educational Planning; *Educational Quality; Foreign Countries; *Higher Education; Instructional Materials; International Cooperation; Long Range Planning; Open Universities; *Relevance (Education)

IDENTIFIERS *Asia Pacific Programme of Education for All

ABSTRACT

This summary of a conference examines the role of higher education in promoting education for all as discussed among representatives from Bangladesh, People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. Participants emphasized the importance of institutional, sectoral, and regional cooperation in achieving goals of education for all and development in general. Participants also stressed that literacy and development were closely linked and that higher education had a significant role to play in helping to identify the changing needs of basic education. The ultimate contribution, argued by one participant, which higher education can make to education for all and to development is the production and application of intellectual innovations, knowledge, and ideas. Specific recommendations on higher education's role in promoting education for all include improved teacher training, curriculum content evaluation, the development of learning packages and management manuals, use of awareness-raising activities, and the employment of the open university model to increase access and alternative modes of delivery. Appendices include the conference agenda and a list of the participants. (GLR)

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Bangkok, 1992

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UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.
Role of higher education in promoting education for all.
Bangkok, 1992.
78 p. (Regional Co-operative Programme in Higher Education for Development in Asia and the Pacific)

1. HIGHER EDUCATION – ASIA/PACIFIC. 2. UNIVERSAL EDUCATION – ASIA/PACIFIC. 3. PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS – ASIA/PACIFIC. 4. CURRICULUM PLANNING – ASIA/PACIFIC. I. Title. II. Series.

378.5

HE

Regional Co-operative Programme
in Higher Education for Development
in Asia and the Pacific

ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN PROMOTING EDUCATION FOR ALL

UNESCO PRINCIPAL REGIONAL OFFICE
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
Bangkok, 1992

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Published by the
UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
P.O. Box 967, Prakanong Post Office
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

Printed in Thailand

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BKHE/92/M/56-500

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One	:	Introduction	1
Chapter Two	:	Regional Overview	4
Chapter Three	:	World Declaration on Education for All: Implications for Higher Education	11
Chapter Four	:	Some Aspects of Higher Education's Role in Promoting Education for All	17
Chapter Five	:	Conclusion and Recommendations	42

ANNEXES

Annex I	:	Welcome Address by Mr. H. Ahmed	49
Annex II	:	Inaugural Address by Prof. Wichit Srisa-an	57
Annex III	:	Address by Mr. F. Ossella	60

APPENDICES

Appendix A	:	Agenda	65
Appendix B	:	List of Participants	67
Appendix C	:	Background of the Conference	71

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The Regional Conference on the Role of Higher Education in *Promoting Education for All* took place in Bangkok, 10-14 December 1990. The conference, sponsored by the Unesco Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, was held as a follow-up to the *World Conference on Education for All* (WCEFA, March 1990) and as a round-up of the UNDP supported project on Regional Technical Co-operation in Higher Education for Development in Asia and the Pacific (RAS/86/171). A full background of the conference can be found in Appendix A.

The immediate outcome of WCEFA was: (i) World Declaration on Education for All (WD); and (ii) Framework for Action (FA) adopted by the conference on 9 March 1990. These two momentous documents reflect the global concerns, the commitments and outline thoughts, principles and guidelines for future actions at international, national and local levels to ensure an appropriate level of education for all.

The primary objective of the Regional Conference on the Role of Higher Education in Promoting Education for All was to conceptualize and articulate the role of the higher education sector in promoting Education for All (EFA). This task was approached through discussions of various related issues in the context of experiences of intra-sectoral dependence and interrelationships within the education system as a whole.

A full list of conference participants is attached in Appendix B. The countries represented were: Bangladesh, People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Observers from Australia, ADB, ESCAP, and UNICEF also attended.

Conference participants were welcomed to Unesco and Bangkok by Mr. Hedayat Ahmed, Director, Unesco Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. He emphasized the importance of institutional, sectoral and regional co-operation in achieving goals of education for all and development in general. The conference was then addressed by Mr. F. Ossella, Deputy Regional Representative, UNDP, Bangkok. He stressed that literacy and development were closely linked and that higher education had a significant role to play in helping to identify the changing needs of basic education. The inaugural speech was given by Professor Wichit Srisa-an, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of University Affairs, Thailand. The ultimate contribution which higher education can make to education for all and development is through the production and application of intellectual innovations, knowledge and ideas, Professor Srisa-an said.

The delegates elected Dr. A. Aziz Khan (Pakistan) as Chairman, Dr. Myung-Han Kim (Rep. of Korea) as Vice-Chairman and Dr. Alicia Tan (Philippines) as Rapporteur. The remainder of the conference was devoted to discussion and analysis of the role of higher education in promoting literacy, continuing education and primary education in the context of WD and FA. The agenda is shown in Appendix C. This report is a summary of the outcome of those deliberations.

The Tripartite Review (TPR) of UNESCO-UNDP Project RAS/86/171 – Regional Technical Co-operation in Higher Education for Development in Asia and the Pacific was held on 13 December 1990. A separate report has been produced on TPR.

Chapter Two

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

As would be expected there is a wide variation of effort and achievement in the education sectors of the Asian and Pacific regions, both absolutely and relatively.

Educational Development in General

The World Development Report (WDR) classifies countries into four groups (including one sub group) according to GNP per capita. In the low income economies, there are 12 (of 42) countries from this region, amongst the lower middle income countries there are 4 (of 37), amongst the upper middle income group there are 1 (of 17) and amongst high income economies there are 2 (of 25). Per capita GNP for 1988 varies for example from US$170 for Bangladesh to US$9,220 for Singapore. The Human Development Report (HDR) has classified the countries into three groups in terms of Human Development rank. Of the 44 'low human development' group countries, 6 are from this region; of the 40 medium group, 9 are from this region; and of the 46 high human development group, 7 are from this region. The HDI index varies from 0.136 for Bhutan to 0.936 for Hong Kong.

The correlation between nominal GDP and HDI index is positive but not perfect, the same is true of the correlations between Real GDP (PPP) and HDI, between nominal or real per capita income and adult literacy rate or literacy deprivation index.

To put it differently, higher per capita income is generally associated with a higher HDI index, but even at a low per capita income level a relatively high HDI and index of literacy rate is attainable.

This brings into question the issue of resource allocation to education in general and to primary education in particular. Here again, the countries show great diversity. The expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP is lowest in the Philippines (1.7 per cent) and highest in Malaysia (7.9 per cent). However, expenditure on education as a percentage of central government expenditure varies from a low 2.6 per cent for Pakistan to a high of 19.3 per cent for Thailand. Further, expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total education expenditure varies from a low 35.7 per cent for Nepal to a high 93.5 per cent for Sri Lanka. However, given the level of development *per se*, the higher the resources devoted to education, particularly to primary education, the higher is the adult literacy and gross primary enrolment rate.

The percentage of people below the poverty line or coefficient as an explanatory variable for low adult literacy rate or low gross enrolment rate of male or female is noticeable. The countries with higher incidence of poverty have, in general, a higher incidence of illiteracy and lower female participation in primary education. The dropout rate is also high for countries with a high incidence of poverty. Further progression from primary to secondary and from secondary to tertiary drops off sharply for countries with a higher incidence of poverty, and this is more so for females than for males.

Country Experience

Country specific experiences expressed during the conference tended to reinforce the general observations made above. Those countries facing the most severe problems of economic

development also had the most pressing problems with regard to participation in primary education and the eradication of illiteracy. Of course, in very populous nations, such as China, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh, the problem of educational deprivation is not uniform across all provinces and regions. Nonetheless, progress in eradicating illiteracy is far more apparent in certain countries than in others.

However, the delegates did not express a mood of pessimism about achieving EFA. Rather, they assumed an aggressive and pro-active stance towards the challenges which the problem of illiteracy presented, and uniformly agreed that higher education had a unique and significant role to play. While some delegates expressed disappointment about past involvement of their higher education system in achieving EFA, none doubted the capacity of higher education to contribute meaningfully to the aims of the WD and the basic goals of the FA. In fact some higher education institutions (HEIs) in the region, for example, in India, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Thailand, are currently involved in programmes of various kinds that reflect active concern for EFA.

The concern of this report is directed towards future action, taking into consideration past achievements and shortcomings. It is worthwhile, therefore, to draw on country specific experiences to illustrate both the problems and the ways in which higher education can contribute to EFA.

Integration of Higher Education: Integration of the higher education sub-system with other sub-systems in the countries participating in the conference varies widely. Generally, the linkage with primary education, adult literacy programme, and continuing education is weak. In Thailand there appears to be a closer integration and interaction between the higher education system and other educational sub-systems. This linkage seems to be almost totally absent, for example, in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; they have yet to adopt a co-ordinated

approach to problems associated with effective primary education, adult literacy, continuing education and teacher training. In the Philippines, voluntary accreditation of private higher education institutions depends, among others, on their commitment to community education.

Teacher Training for Primary Education: Training of teachers for primary education sub-systems also presents a diversified picture. In Bangladesh, as is the case with Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Viet Nam, a primary school teacher's training is mainly conducted by institutions which are not part of the mainstream of higher education, except insofar as most of the instructors are products of universities or colleges. Thus the higher education system bears no direct responsibility for the appropriateness and quality of teacher's training. On the other hand, HEIs in the Republic of Korea and some institutions in India and Thailand offer courses at the Bachelors level for primary education teachers and administrators. While not discounting the necessity of differentiation, specialization and curriculum, emphasis for primary school teachers and administrators, the delegates expressed concern about separation between different levels of teacher training and between teacher training and other HEIs.

Training for Literacy Worker: Training of workers for adult and mass education is largely done under the aegis of adult literacy, female literacy, industrial worker literacy or rural literacy programmes under various ministries and departments in most of the countries. Such programmes seem to have adopted a stylized short-term *ad hoc* approach in this regard. This appears to have a low impact due to the absence of backup support. Some universities in India are being geared towards a programme which involves students spending time in literacy activities at the community level under the national literacy movement (NLM). Indonesian higher education institutions also direct their students

to various development activities, including adult literacy, at the village level. NGOs which also work in the villages on programmes for improving the literacy skill of its target group, have generally avoided interacting meaningfully in this regard with higher education. For example, in Bangladesh, NGOs have developed materials for training primary school teachers and literacy workers, with good results. But the involvement of HEIs seem to be desirable in order to sustain such activities.

Open Universities: Open universities and distance education programmes have played an increasingly important role in primary teacher training. Even though there are other institutions for teacher training, China's Radio and Television University (CRTVU) has imparted instruction in teacher training, including training of primary school teachers, through its well-structured system. Allama Iqbal Open University in Pakistan has contributed substantially to the training of primary teachers and literacy workers. In Bangladesh, the distance education programme has been solely directed at training secondary school teachers and could not initiate any programme for training primary school teachers. In order to address the problem of training and retraining primary school teachers in those countries of the region where non-trained teachers are predominant, the open university and distance education programmes require expansion. Sri Lanka looks mostly to its open university system to play a wider role in non-formal education and adult education, including the training of teachers.

Curriculum: In the preparation of curriculum for literacy programmes, adult education and primary education, the role of higher education institutions is generally marginal, largely based on individual rather than institutional participation, in spite of the well known backwash effect of higher education. In the case of continuing education, particularly for primary school teachers, administrators and others, the involvement of the open univer-

sities is direct. Absence of a continuing and meaningful interaction with higher education institutions in this regard, adversely affects the quality of students as well as teaching in the primary education sub-system. Even in the preparation of **textbooks**, the centralized approach in most of these countries has excluded HEIs from playing a meaningful role in upgrading curricula and pedagogical methods.

Experimental Schools: Most HEIs in the region, particularly colleges and universities (other than teachers colleges) have no experimental schools where innovation and multi-disciplinary interaction could become effective in promoting standards in primary education. The countries which have attained a high literacy rate, e.g., NICs including Republic of Korea, are concerned with the quality of the education system as a whole, though this is no less important for other countries. The participants recognized the general absence of experimental projects in the universities and colleges.

Educational Planning: The involvement of HEIs in educational planning generally has been limited, except possibly for Thailand. However, in some countries such as India national education policy is greatly debated with educators from HEIs as participants. Indian's higher education sector has evolved various 'commissions' and 'committees' to look at the problems of achieving education for all, and programmes in HEIs for tackling the problems. But effective contribution from the higher education sector in this regard is generally limited in most countries.

A database for information and planning is recognized as a basic necessity. Thailand has developed a workable computerized system at Chulalongkorn University linked to other higher education institutions. In other countries, such networking of databases does not seem to exist. Nevertheless, a limited database does exist in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and other

countries of the region, even though quality of data and their relevance vary widely.

What has been stated above is intended only to illustrate and underscore the gaps and potentials which exist in these countries. It is necessary to augment new policy and programmes that would allow HEIs to actualize their potentials and to enable them to play a meaningful and co-ordinated role along with other sub-systems of the education sector for achieving education for all.

Chapter Three

WORLD DECLARATION ON EDUCATION FOR ALL: IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education has an important and unique contribution to make to the achievement of education for all. However, this fact has not been sufficiently recognized or exploited by the various groups and agencies (including higher education institutions themselves) concerned with furthering the aims of the World Declaration and the Framework for Action.

Breaking Isolation: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized that the right to education is a fundamental aspect of social justice. Also, research and practical experience have demonstrated the value of education, particularly quality education, to social, political and economic development. But access to education, even primary education, remains limited in many countries of this region due to various social and economic constraints. The allocation and utilization of resources for the development of education have not always been efficient or effective, which in turn has created a vicious circle of ignorance, non-achievement of creative potential of individuals, low productivity, poverty and malnutrition, lack of investment and a low level of development. To break this circle, society and the individuals which constitute society must be empowered with need based basic education which promotes appropriate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes. Higher education should not and cannot,

stand aloof from the total educational needs of society if it is to continue to enjoy community support.

Clearly the expansion of higher education, whether in size or function, is not uniform across all countries of the Asia and Pacific region. Nonetheless, it is becoming universally accepted that higher education cannot exist as an enclave isolated from the needs and demands of the wider society or the other sub-sectors which constitute the total education system of a nation.

Extended Role of Higher Education: It is increasingly being recognized that the importance of higher education to national development extends far beyond the production of graduates and basic research. Everywhere, higher education performs a range of key economic and social functions, the value of which is acknowledged both by governments and the wider society. Small elite systems of higher education, serving the interests of a narrow proportion of the population are becoming creatures of the past. As higher education moves from elite to mass to universal systems of participation, it involves directly, or touches upon the lives of increasing proportions of the population of each country, and is called upon to perform an expanding range of tasks.

Higher education, particularly the university, is a distinct and clearly recognizable form of social organization. In terms of both structure and function, there is great variety amongst the different national systems of higher education. What may be regarded as a new task for a particular national system may be a traditional function for another system. Higher education is not a static form of social organization, but one that must continually evolve and adapt to new knowledge and changing economic and social pressures. All higher education systems are ultimately accountable to the society which sponsors them.

Integration of Approach: Higher education stands at the apex of every formal system of education. For administrative purposes, educational systems are commonly sub-divided into three tiers: primary, secondary and higher. But administrative convenience should not be allowed to create the compartmentalization of educational systems. Education taken as a whole consists of integrated and interactive sub-systems with each tier acting in partnership with the others to achieve the basic educational and social goals of a society. Any claim that higher education is independent from primary and secondary education is mistaken. In fact, several higher education systems have been criticized because of the undue influence of their matriculation requirement on the curriculum of compulsory education. Higher education has always taken an interest in primary and secondary education, although far too often this interest has been narrowly self-serving.

Synergic effect: An overly compartmentalized system of education loses its synergic effect. Because of the interactive nature of the sub-systems in the context of education for all embracing adult literacy, primary education and continuing education, the higher education sector has a significant role to play. Because of its structural location and critical mass of expertise, higher education should be in an ideal position to form a mutually supportive partnership with the other educational sectors for the purpose of achieving the aims of the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action.

Necessity of Interaction: The World Declaration and the Framework for Action underscored the importance of need assessment and actions to meet multi-sectoral needs based on multi-sectoral strategies. In devising such action plans, horizontal and vertical interaction as well as bilateral and multilateral cooperation are basic for achieving success. The multi-dimensional approach implicitly recognizes the role of the higher education

sector. In a number of ways, higher education provides the human resource for the basic, primary and continuing education sectors, and often encompasses continuing education under its own umbrella. Higher education constructs methodologies for evaluating the gap between needs and achievements and helps to develop modalities to meet the gap through applied research. Higher education contributes to the improvement in human resource inputs through training in management and the utilization of resources. It also assists in the design of curricula which are relevant and need based and it can help further community participation in the achievement of the World Declaration.

Higher education is just not another tier in the education system. It produces the research and high level manpower necessary for the development of both the economy and the educational system as a whole. For example, education for all is only possible if there are enough trained and committed teachers. Their training is invariably the responsibility of universities and other HEIs. The capacity of higher education to produce the research, innovative strategies and technology to effectively and efficiently serve the needs of disadvantaged groups must be exploited. It is essential that this sector is consciously and deliberately taken into consideration when devising strategies to meet the objectives set down in the World Declaration and the Framework for Action.

Obligation of Public Service: Higher education institutions serve the economic, social and cultural institutions of a society through basic and applied research and through the production of graduates with various disciplinary orientations. It serves the nation in other ways too. Higher education, for example, not only contributes to the preservation of a nation's cultural heritage, but also helps adapt values and attitudes to the demands of development and change. Through the creation of a

broader understanding and wider vision, HEIs can create awareness about present social dilemmas and future strategies for change with regard to social, cultural, and economic development.

As the higher education is heavily subsidized, it is obligated to provide public service and must concern itself with the legitimate expectations of the society which, in a developing economy, cannot but encompass Education for All. Education and literacy are not only fundamental to social transformation, but also are basic human rights of all citizens of a nation. The major dimensions of educational accountability are:

1. access (equity);
2. relevance (appropriateness); and
3. excellence (quality).

In terms of its social accountability, higher education is required "to illuminate a whole range of problems within the world of affairs" in order to facilitate the process of change which is the basic principle underlying EFA. It needs to be recognized that higher education and a nation's future are bound together and the quest for knowledge must be geared to helping prepare individual citizens to effectively participate in the dynamics of social and economic evolution.

The higher education sub-system must be involved in assessing needs, planning action, designing policy and improving managerial and technological capabilities for defining basic learning needs and for defining ways of attaining EFA. Such an approach requires higher education to address itself to the needs of the society and it views higher education as part of an integrated system of education with the context of scholarship and public service. HEIs are capable of enriching the basic disciplines through research, teaching and learning, and through interaction with other educational sub-sectors.

The remainder of this report is devoted to a detailed analysis of the ways in which higher education can contribute to WD and FA. Here, the argument has been that higher education cannot turn its back on the basic educational needs of society for it has an important and unique contribution to make to achieving EFA.

Chapter Four

SOME ASPECTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION'S ROLE IN PROMOTING EDUCATION FOR ALL

The conference felt that continuation of the traditional academic legacy of a closed system in HEIs is not in accord with the need for meeting the challenges of EFA when geographical and time-bound concerted action is required. Post systems compartmentalized education, and merely validated degrees with respect to teacher training (primarily for secondary education). This has created an attitude of isolationism with limited productive impact in the socio-economic context. This isolationist approach with respect to education, particularly higher education, has limited education's interaction with other sectors of the economy and has constrained the potentialities of HEIs. There are important areas in which HEIs can play a meaningful role in promoting achievement of EFA, including literacy, primary education and continuing education. Some of them are discussed below.

Training of the Educators

Obviously, higher education has a direct role to play in educating teachers. Education for All is impossible in the absence of a core of well-qualified and highly committed educators which include teachers, teacher trainers, managers and field level workers and a variety of other persons.

It needs to be recognized that the structure of higher education's involvement in teacher education varies from country to country. In some countries, the universities are only involved with training secondary education teachers, while other institutions, such as teachers colleges, have responsibility for primary teachers. In other countries, both primary and secondary teachers are trained in the universities.

Principle of Direction: But the structure of teacher education is not as important as the principle of directing the efforts of the higher education system towards the production of a well qualified and committed primary teaching force. Where primary teacher training is separate from the universities, the universities still have the responsibility of supplying academic staff to the teachers colleges. Moreover, an effective system of teacher training is only possible if universities and other higher education institutions work in close harmony with teacher training institutions for a common purpose. In this respect, attitudes and values are as important as skills.

Specialist Training: The universities also have an important role to play in producing specialists in the area of primary education. As an academic specialization, primary education is often undervalued. This attitude is unfortunate, and must be overcome, for primary education forms the base upon which the rest of the education system rests. Specialist training in the area of primary education could provide the human manpower essential for the effective development of this sector.

Specialist training in the area of primary education should be geared to the development needs of the nation. Different types of specialist may be required. For example, a person who specializes in the basic educational needs of isolated ethnic groups in rural areas may need knowledge and skills somewhat different from the specialist concentrating on the educational needs of disadvantaged urban groups and women. The type and

variety of specialist training required in the primary area can be addressed by higher education institutions through research, and this research should then be used to construct course programmes. A differentiated teacher education programme that serves different target groups appears necessary in order to adequately address the multitude of problems facing the achievement of universal primary education in particular countries.

The production of specialists in primary education should not be a goal in its own right, but a means to build an effective and well qualified primary teaching force.

Partnership and Backup Support: Of course, teacher training should not be viewed as an exercise that stops for the individual upon graduation. HEIs should form a partnership with their students and graduates, based on the principle of life long learning and continued upgrading of skills and qualifications. Also, universities in particular can support the staff and educational programmes in teacher training colleges in many ways. Universities are in a most advantageous position to ensure the quality of teacher training programmes. This can be accomplished not merely through examination and standard setting but most effectively by providing an integrated backup support to primary teacher training.

Continuing Education: The continuing education function of universities and other higher education institutions can assist primary school teachers in keeping up with advances in knowledge in their respective fields and to improve their teaching skills. Moreover, in some countries, a substantial proportion of primary school teachers are not qualified. Short courses, workshops, and other continuing education activities can greatly assist these individuals in the performance of their teaching duties.

Higher education also has a responsibility in training expert teachers in the area of continuing education. In many countries, it is being recognized that continuing education is not an extra-curricular adjunct to the main academic interests of an institution, but an academic specialization in its own right. Teaching at a distance and open university systems seem to be in an ideal position to involve primary school teachers in life long learning, as will be discussed further in the later part of the report.

Teacher training involves more than instruction in teaching methods and curriculum. A primary school is, amongst other things, a social organization. Management education, which universities can provide, is also required for the effective delivery of primary education.

Literacy Workers: All workers involved in the eradication of illiteracy will not be involved in the formal school system. Community workers, welfare workers, and others dealing with problems of literacy also need education, training and support. Higher education institutions can become involved with assisting such people with their efforts. Many universities now have "centres" of continuing education attached to them, as for example in a number of universities in India. They can provide examples to others.

In several countries, teachers do not receive the status and appreciation that they deserve and as a consequence many capable individuals turn away from the teaching profession. Higher education can help overcome this situation in several ways. It can reinforce in the society the fact that teachers are qualified professionals, equal to other professional groups in society. But this will only be accomplished through the demonstrated quality of the teacher education programmes.

Research: Much more research needs to be done in order to devise effective teacher education programmes which could

have an impact on EFA. Such research has to be needs based and, as mentioned, must differentiate amongst the various target groups. It should take into account the importance of the dissemination of information, effective training and retraining, quality, and alternative and innovative delivery systems which incorporate aspects of new technology.

Curriculum Development and Evaluation

Because of its knowledge base and critical mass of expertise, higher education institutions, particularly universities, can make important contribution in curriculum development and evaluation. Such a role will call for close association with other sub-sectors of the educational system, national curriculum bodies and the community. In order to be effective, a curriculum should be based on needs assessment conducted at the community level, and as with teacher training, a differentiated curriculum targeted at different disadvantaged groups may be necessary. A differentiated curriculum is probably of particular relevance to a society that has many different linguistic groups.

Every curriculum contains values as well as "objective knowledge". The value laden implications should be taken into account in the construction of the curriculum. This can only be accomplished if the users of the curriculum – teachers, students and parents – are actively involved in curriculum development.

Dropout: In some countries the dropout rate in primary schools is very high and the effectiveness of learning activities is questionable. This needs to be turned around. The production of more well qualified and committed teachers is part of the answer to the problem. But curriculum also plays a role. For example, the massive educational development to improve primary education project now underway in Bangladesh has recognized teacher training and curriculum reform as a critical input. This presents a great challenge to the higher education

community, particularly to those academics interested in educational research. Possibly more work needs to be done on dropout related issues and on primary education itself as an end in its own right rather than treating it merely as a feeder system to secondary education.

Literacy and Continuing Education: The need to design and update curriculum is not confined solely to the formal education sectors. Literacy programmes and continuing education programmes, equally important for achieving education for all, also have a curriculum. HEIs can help these programmes develop their curriculum in many ways, particularly with regard to establishing the philosophy and rationale of curriculum development. Evaluation of curriculum is also an appropriate role for higher education in this respect. But once again, this can only be done in partnership with the relevant groups if the exercise is going to be effective.

Support to Others: In many countries the responsibility of curriculum development for primary education falls to branches of the ministry of education. HEIs cannot take up the responsibility or duplicate the curriculum development functions of other bodies. But they can assist these bodies in many ways: by making their expertise available; through research and continuous monitoring of the effectiveness of curriculum; by helping design methodologies for research related to curriculum development; through analysis and criticisms of the educational philosophies underlying the curriculum; and through evaluation and by assisting effective implementation.

The role of universities in curriculum designs has largely been a passive one. There are now opportunities for them to take a leadership role, particularly with regard to being an independent critic of curriculum design and implementation. But it must be a creditable critic, which can only be accomplished

through the active participation of higher education in the problems of education and literacy facing the nation.

Preparation of Instructional/Reading Materials

Magnitude: While the curriculum is the total learning package(s) of an educational system, it is supported by various instructional materials: books, slides, maps, pictures, etc. Preparation of these materials is an enormous undertaking in many countries both in terms of quantity and quality of the materials to be produced. This is particularly so in countries where literacy rate and participation rate in primary education is still very low. There is a cluster of countries in the region where literacy rate varies from 26 to 49 per cent. As a result, a large variety of materials, and in huge quantity, must be produced. Support and co-operation of all available institutions need to be mobilized. Experts within higher education institutions can and do assist with the design and preparation of instructional materials. But it seems that a more concerted effort is necessary, particularly in those countries with high illiteracy rates.

Instructional design, like teaching and curriculum, cannot take place in isolation. Instructional materials will only be as good as the knowledge on which they are based, knowledge which includes the needs of the individual and the society. Partnership with others – primary schools, parent/teacher groups, relevant ministries, etc. – provides higher education institutions with many exciting possibilities for involvement the preparation of instructional materials.

HEIs have the expertise to critically assess instructional materials already in use and the knowledge base to suggest new and innovative ways of approaching instructional design. The application of new technology to instructional design is an area where the particular expertise of the university community should be brought to bear. Different instructional materials serve dif-

ferent purposes, and higher education research can help match the appropriate instructional materials with the desired learning goals. It can also engage in a continued monitoring process of the effectiveness of instructional materials.

Impact Studies

The importance of research conducted by higher education institutions to the effectiveness of teacher education, curriculum design and implementation, as well as the production of instructional materials was mentioned above. But higher education research has an even broader role to play in achieving Education for All.

Expertise: Higher education can bring its research expertise to the understanding and analysis of the total impact of various programmes associated with universal primary education, adult literacy and continuing education. In order to achieve education for all, programmes for universal primary education, continual life long education and total literacy must run in parallel. But there is a severe lack of research on the impact of the various programmes and on how the different strands mutually reinforce one another.

Comprehensive Approach: Past evaluations of teaching at various levels have usually concentrated on the percentage of students graduating at a given examination. But the evaluation of performance of students at various levels and at different periods needs to be understood against the background of socio-economic variables, school-facility index, teacher-student relations, etc. But past research in many developing countries has been inadequate in this respect. It is important to assess performance against the curricula which should be designed to meet the assessed individual and community need in the context of development. Such evaluations cannot be meaningfully undertaken by primary education, continuing education or adult

literacy programmes alone; they must have the assistance of the research capacity of the higher education community.

Evaluation of Teaching, Administration and Curricula: The evaluation of the performance of a teacher or administrator or of the relevance of the curricula is even more difficult and complex. These require continuing research and evaluation as part of a multi-disciplinary teaching and research programme within a higher education institution. Clearly, here HEIs can play the leading role. Educational innovation and reform directed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the other sub-systems as well as adapting them to meet current and emerging needs of the economy and society, are basic functions that higher education cannot overlook.

There are many other areas where the research function of higher education has an unique contribution to make, such as: evaluation of the lasting affect of primary education; the effect of literacy programmes on inter-generational literacy; community based needs assessment, etc.

Pilot Projects and Innovations

In a system which depends on nationally/regionally held public examinations at lower levels, the scope for experimentation with curricula and pedagogical method is limited because of centralization. In a system which works on a unitary basis with recognition/accreditation being conditional on facilities and quality of outputs, experimentation with teaching materials and pedagogical methods is better encouraged. In some cases, government/institutional monopoly of textbook production limits scope for competition in production of teaching materials, which in turn limits experimentation with teaching methods.

Experimental School: The involvement of higher education as an integrated partner with other education sub-sectors – in curriculum and instructional design, in teacher education, in

research – should help sponsor experimentation and innovation with regard to achieving the goal of EFA. One particular pilot project could be the creation of an experimental school attached to one or more universities. Similar to this, university and colleges can take up projects for development of rural primary schools and adult education centres. What exchange can possibly be done is for a university or college to "adopt" one or two schools and adult literacy centres, provide them with professional assistance, monitor their progress and finally help them to develop as "models" for others. The students, too, can play an important role.

The very concept of an experimental school being attached to the faculty of education in many universities is based on the need for a continuous experimentation with teaching materials and pedagogy. The creation of experimental schools could be an exciting approach for higher education institutions to problems of learning and literacy. Much of the knowledge gained from impact studies and other research could be first applied in the laboratory schools, and then the innovations designed and tested here could be introduced to a wider population.

Field Projects: There are many other ways higher education institutions could mount pilot projects aimed at achieving Education for All. For example, institutions in several countries with low rates of literacy insist that students spend a period of field work at the village level assisting in development projects. Some of these projects may involve adult literacy programmes. Experiments in some universities in India in this respect have proved to be successful. Economic incentive programmes for disadvantaged groups usually have a literacy component or similar spin-off. HEIs may wish to consider introducing a course for their own students which raises their awareness of the problems of illiteracy. There are many other types of pilot projects that could be of direct relevance. One may be that a

university take a specific area where its efforts are directed (in a composite manner) at the development of primary education and literacy programme. But the main point to be made here is that higher education institutions are the best placed institutions to engage in experimentation to help achieve the objectives of WD and FA.

Research

Research is basic to higher education and the role of research in achieving effective and efficient programmes of universal primary education, adult literacy and continual life long learning has already been emphasized. Nonetheless, it is worthwhile restating the importance of higher education research to achieving Education for All. Research efforts can be directed particularly to such specific areas as:

1. Instructural methodology;
2. Evaluation of reading materials;
3. Assessment of learners' needs;
4. Evaluation of programmes;
5. Project appraisal;
6. Application of modern technology;
7. Experimental field projects.

Of course, all research on literacy programmes and learning programmes need not be the sole preserve of universities. Individual programmes and agencies may have their own research agenda. But even here, higher education can contribute through assisting with research design, the choosing of appropriate methodologies and analysis. The significance of education for all cannot allow the research capacity of higher education institutions to remain untapped.

In addition to its more general research contributions, HEIs can take a leadership role in constructing a national database on issues associated with primary education, adult literacy and life-long education. This role is discussed in more detail in the later part of this report.

Management Capacity

Higher education institutions have an extensive management capacity which could be put at the disposal of various programmes involved with EFA. An effective manager is a problem solver, and it is these problem solving skills which are most required by literacy and learning programmes. Moreover, since in many countries, primary and adult literacy programmes are not adequately funded from the public purse, it is important that higher education designs ways to mobilize support, to minimize wastage, and to intensify use of resources and cost-effective approaches at all levels. Sensitive and committed academics have a role to play in the management of various literacy and continuing education programmes. Their analytical and problem solving skills as well as their organizational abilities should be of substantial benefit.

Training of Trainers: On a more systematic level, HEIs could help train the trainers with regard to managerial and organizational skills. Also, research into the management and organization of various programmes would be of value. In addition, higher education institutions can help train personnel in the collection and interpretation of data, which are basic management skills. The purpose of education, particularly higher education, should be to inculcate in the individual an ability to conceptualize, an ability to identify and master the knowledge base required to address a problem, an ability to analyze the system of relationships to give coherence and find alternative solutions to the problem, and finally, an ability to evaluate and

synthesize the outcomes of analysis. Such general principles should be basic to all management education.

Higher education institutions cannot overlook the need to strengthen their own management capacity and skill. HEIs not only need the will to become involved in EFA, but also the management and organizational skills to make their involvement as efficient and effective as possible. The development of a management training and information service should extend both within and without the higher education institution.

National Plans of Action: Planning is an essential component of effective management. HEIs can play an important role in helping to plan effectively the goals and implementation strategies of various literacy and continuing education programmes. On the national level, higher education could become a direct participant in the preparation of "national action plans" to achieve the aims of the World Declaration and the Framework for Action, which is discussed in more detail in latter part of this report.

Mobilization of Community Support

The success of primary education, literacy and continuing education programmes depends on strong community support, which in turn can only be build through meeting community needs and expectations. Programmes must be productive and relevant at the individual and community levels as well as beyond. Only in a context such as this will the community demand the expansion of the programmes as well as participate in solving problems associated with drop-outs, absenteeism and failure.

Research: Community involvement can be enhanced through an effective system of continual impact research and technological advance in the education sub-systems. As mentioned above, such functions cannot be performed alone by institutions providing primary or continuing education or imparting

literacy, nor can it be accomplished through one-off consultancies. The role of higher education in this regard is very important. HEIs have both the research capacity and the administrative neutrality to effectively conduct such research.

Assessing Needs and Awareness Course: In addition to evaluation of the various programmes, higher education can provide community-based educational awareness courses and at the same time help the community formulate its own plans. Such activities should help engender in the community a feeling of ownership of the programme. Higher education has a direct role to play in assessing community needs, in devising strategies to meet those needs and, through the involvement of its own students, in providing some of the personnel to implement the programmes.

There are of course, many different types of communities, and strategies to mobilize community support must be tailored to local circumstances. Different types of interventions may be necessary for different groups of people. Also, due to the variety of needs and the different characteristics of the communities, higher education should adopt an interdisciplinary approach to assessing needs and generating support.

Service Efforts: HEIs may also come into direct contact with the community through its continuing education function. If the continuing education activities are effective, then a good deal of community support should be generated. This is one means by which higher education can generate social support, not only for its continuing education activities, but also for its entire range of educational and research functions.

Individual academics may also help mobilize community support through their research or service efforts. But what is called for is the systematic involvement of the entire higher

education sector, in partnership with other sub-systems, in assessing and meeting community needs.

Assistance in the Preparation of National Action Plan for EFA

World Declaration on Education for All has provided a framework for action in which priority action at national level has also been identified. The UN and international agencies are encouraging the developing countries to prepare their national action plan for which technical assistance may be made available.

Need Assessment: The need assessment of the community and society at large is basic to the national plan. As mentioned earlier, such need assessment should ideally be done on a disaggregated basis by communities and groups, and then aggregated wherever necessary and feasible. The diversity of social groups and presence of differentiated needs of child, youth, adult, women, drop-outs, etc. would require evaluation of existing conditions on the ground. This would help to identify geographical and time bound targets and objectives which in turn, in the context of conditions on the ground and feasible resource mobilization, help to define alternative approaches for EFA. Such differences in approach would require different resource expenditure, and different institutional arrangements with built-in capacity for flexible response.

Supportive Policy: Planning, however, only begins with the identification of goals, objectives and targets. This needs to be supplemented by supportive policy and institutional modalities for achieving those targets in a cost-effective manner so that capital and recurrent cost outlay is minimized.

Planning should involve examination of the feasibility of using existing systems, and if necessary, their adjustment. It calls for harnessing additional supportive systems, a clear formulation of relevant knowledge and skill development. Furthermore, an identification of ways and means for promotion of broad scale

community participation, of modalities for the delivery of a learning package, of the competence needed by the teacher/literacy workers, and of the resources required within a cost-effective system, are basic the elements in planning for EFA.

To ensure such an action plan, which should rank high in priority within the framework of national plans, effective policy support at all levels would be required. This would include sensitizing HEIs for EFA; readjusting curricula in HEIs to give priority training for achieving EFA, institutional adjustment in HEIs if and where necessary, an according priority in resource allocation to departments and institutions that contribute towards EFA; inclusion of EFA components in other community development programmes and improving managerial competency in HEIs for EFA.

Planning is just not merely an agglomeration of projects with designed resource outlay and desired impact. Planning in resource constrained economies, where social sectors have always suffered despite their contribution to productivity and standard of living of society in general, it is necessary to adopt flexible, appropriately weighted and prioritized plans to protect the core efforts for EFA. The methodology for this could be developed by HEIs in collaboration with the planners in the country concerned.

Pooled Expertise: Higher education institutions have the expertise to undertake literacy studies to evaluate the existing institutional modalities with respect to primary and continuing education, to analyse the wastages and problems that need correction, to identify the areas that require augmentation, to assess diversified community needs, to design alternative modalities and to undertake policy analysis for development of appropriate institutional and resource support for desired impact in the context of EFA. This is to be done alongside of the development of methodologies of data collection and its storage and analysis, of

basic learning content analysis, of developing pedagogical method including required technology, and finally, of designing modalities of efficient management, supervision as well as impact analysis. Planning is a continuous circle, thus with the impact analysis and updated information, a new plan to meet the deficiencies of the initial effort would be required. HEIs, through their pooled experience, expertise and continued association, will create the in-country capacity to identify plans and programmes for achieving EFA through appropriately modified policies and strategies.

Creation of Data Base

Preparation of a meaningful programme for EFA is dependent on a meaningful data base which reflects the realities at the individual, family, community and institutional levels. In many countries of this region the data base is weak or incomplete and in some cases highly misleading. More numerical information need be transformed into meaningful data which not only indicates gaps and deficiencies but also is of such a nature as to define parameters for impact analysis.

Community Level Data: The data at the community level should be such as to clearly bring forth the basic characteristics of the community e.g., number of households, gender ratio, dependency ratio, age structure, economic activity, income and expenditure pattern, availability of educational facility, potential of recruiting local literacy workers etc. in respect of available local resources. Such data should not only be helpful to define differentiated basic learning needs within the community, but would help to identify priority intervention programmes.

Data Updating: Data has to be updated continuously. This requires a cost-effective approach to collection. It is easy to devise 'student' cards that record basic socio-economic data and progression rates through the formal/non-formal education

programmes. However, they should contain data which could help explain non-performance or slow progression (e.g. problems related to poor health, to family condition, to extraneous discouraging factors etc.). It may also be necessary to have data on teachers, (e.g. their socio-economic profile, their preparedness and commitment, their time-use, attitude, aptitude and values, their training and orientation, etc.). Data may also be collected on the nature of management of formal/non-formal programmes at the community level, including mobilization of community support.

Dynamics of Development: Databases in the context of EFA and appropriateness and efficacy of policy and programmes have to be created with due consideration to the dynamics of development. It is quite possible that some of these data are being collected under different programmes for different purposes. In that case appropriateness of such data need be checked. It may sometimes not possible to mount such a database programme for the whole country at one time, though that would be the ideal. Thus a pilot/sample survey(s) to collect such data become necessary. To provide an immediate basis for EFA programmes, sample surveys should be methodologically sound. Furthermore, it is easy to collect community data through the formal/non-formal institutions engaged in EFA and use a random sample to check accuracy. Once the collection of relevant data is institutionalized, the effort required for continuously updating them would be minimal. But commitment of policy makers and institutions involved would have to be there in an unequivocal manner.

Institutional Networking

Within Countries: Networking HEIs as well as institutions directly involved in EFA within a country is considered to be highly desirable and rewarding. Such networking would help

to establish a rudimentary need based education forum. Such a forum is helpful in conceptualizing approaches with respect to education for all. The experiences of agencies involved in the delivery system are important input for improving differentiated learning packages according to a community's felt and perceived needs. These are essential for devising appropriate pedagogical methodology for teaching/learning activities. Such a forum can encourage the undertaking of a baseline survey according to an agreed methodology both qualitative and quantitative, based on defined criterion of achievement in the field. This would help to generate comparable data for impact evaluation. The exchange of experiences, research findings, teaching materials as well as management of resistance to change through sensitizing the individuals and the community are not only helpful but also essential for the achievement of the goals of EFA. Such a group should be as far as possible open and informal.

It is, however, assumed that a university community would be appropriately aware of their intellectual responsibility in the broad social context, and promote pooling of efforts and resources to achieve optimal results, particularly with respect to teacher training, research, curriculum development and promotion of managerial effectiveness of EFA programmes. It should be mentioned that many university groups are already directly or indirectly involved in literacy promotion, literacy training and literacy research. They have the critical mass of expertise to help launch a frontal attack on illiteracy.

Sub-Regional: Following the same logic, sub-regional networking of a basic literacy forum including HEIs is desirable. The sub-regions have a general similarity of heritage, culture, values, organizational structure and socio-economic characteristics. The difference, however, lies in the intensity and diversity of the problem, experience with respect to operationalizing the literacy, primary education and continuing education

programmes, and the nature of immediacy attached to EFA. The proximity of sub-regions also provides an added advantage of cost-effective exchange of expertise, materials, methodological refinements and results of pedagogical experiments. Such expertise and experience relates to conceptualization of the problem, creation of the database, strategy for mobilization of community support, preparation of basic learning packages for diversified groups, alternate delivery systems, supervision and monitoring as well as methodologies for impact studies of EFA programmes. However, one could envisage diversity in networking by functions and levels. The basic idea is to optimize funding and sensitize the policy-makers, managers and input-suppliers of the EFA programme.

Regional: Conceptually, regional networking is also envisaged. Such networking could address policy alternatives under different developmental scenario so as to be able to share the cost of EFA programmes meaningfully, and widely distribute the benefits of EFA programmes spatially and by social strata.

Politico-economic diversity in the region has led to systemic differences in the approach to policy, planning and programming with respect to education, interlinkages of this sector with other sectors, and amongst the sub-sectors within the education sector itself. Regional exchanges of information, ideas and experiences, achievements and failures, and analysis of impact would help to generate a critical mass of materials on a continuous basis on EFA. Such exchanges could point out the outcomes of national efforts against such criteria as access, appropriateness and sustainability. Learning from each other's field level implementation of policies and programmes would then be invigorating and mutually reinforcing and would as a feedback from regional interaction generate consciousness about efficiency and accountability at the policy making and institutional level .

Special Role of Open Universities and Distance Education

Open universities have emerged as suitable institutions through which it is possible to address diverse and flexible programmes for education in a cost-effective manner. The experiences of open universities in Pakistan, India, Thailand and China amongst others, have indeed been highly rewarding.

Teacher Education: One of the programme areas where open universities have contributed much is teacher education. In doing so they have generally used available expertise within the higher education system, in particular for designing programmes, preparing teaching/learning materials, designing test items, and administering the programme using wherever possible audio-visual technology. It has been possible for these institutions to cover a larger populace in a short period than would be possible otherwise be feasible. Thus open universities and HEIs with their continuing education centres of distance education methodology can contribute effectively towards development of manpower for literacy programmes, regardless of whether such manpower consists of school teachers, 'barefoot literacy workers' or 'student volunteers involved in community work as part of their internship requirement'.

Input Evaluation Studies: Such centres may not only become providers of designed programmes for basic learning packages. Through impact evaluation studies they could raise the quality of literacy packages as well as of primary education. Furthermore, it would be possible to develop differentiated basic learning packages to meet differentiated basic learning needs of different groups, such as school drop-outs, women, the disabled, disadvantaged, agricultural communities, tribal people, etc. Availability of such learning packages at home is likely to increase participation of women and school-leavers who dropped out due to economic distress. Additionally, differentiated packages would help to address the issue of appropriateness and relevance.

Moreover, open universities and continuing education help greatly in promoting life-long education and transmit knowledge of developments taking place in trades so that one is in a position to judge relevance for oneself.

Innovative Programme: The innovative nature of the programmes can also affect the attitudes and values visa vis bringing diffident people out of their shell to utilize their potential, encourage pessimists to become active in individual and social life, create confidence in one's abilities and also put importance of ethical values in proper social perspectives. The one-to-one teaching/learning process, despite its advantages, has been substituted by well-researched custom-made relevant learning packages. It has been found desirable and effective when time is running out in many countries and when resource constraint is working as a brake. For innovative approaches already established, educational technology is likely to provide further support.

However, it should be noted that in order to be effective, the differentiated learning packages for literacy, primary education and continuing education have to be based on assessment of community needs, as well as individuals' aspiration. In order to design such learning packages involvement of HEIs along with other sub-systems of the education sector is essential, as they are best endowed to perform the functions of research and development for the education system as a whole. This is true for all sectors of education, even when technology and methodology are different.

Filling Gap: But there are countries where open universities and continuing education centres have not become operational. These countries should, on a priority basis, establish distance education units and work towards the establishment of an open university. Experience of the member countries of Association of Open Universities in the region as well as those in

the developed countries, would be helpful in making such a programme work. To begin with, regions with basic socio-economic similarity may use the materials developed by these institutions as prototypes and transcribe them into their language for local use, and modify them as they go along.

Co-operation with UN/International/Regional Agencies

WCEFA has underscored the fact that EFA can only be achieved through concerted and well-orchestrated national and international activities mutually supporting each other for the achievement of an objective which has been understood as an important component of fundamental human rights as well as of basic needs of mankind. It was recognized that extensive il-literacy has been working as a brake on social progress and achievement of a desired minimum level of living. Impact of literacy and primary education in augmenting social and economic productivity of individuals has been established through micro level research, macro level longitudinal studies and cross section studies involving divergent communities and countries, even though such studies have not been carried out in all countries of the region.

Marginal Role: Recognition of the importance of literacy and primary education can be found in programmes launched to achieve population control and family welfare, primary health care, higher labour productivity in industry and agriculture, emancipation of women, mother and child care etc., which have been launched and supported by various UN, international agencies or bilateral donors. However, these programmes are generally undertaken as separate endeavours with defined time and space limitations, and in many cases, though, they may have resulted in duplication and overlaps. Further, such programmes created a niche of their own and had little interaction with the education system as a whole. The input from the higher

education sector, where it was used, was more from individuals than institutions. Rarely were the HEIs encouraged to actively participate in the preparation of conditions for establishing feasibility, the preparation of learning packages for outreach workers, the designing of management and monitoring methodology, in the collection of baseline data and definition of parameters of achievement, the research about impact and factors that inhibit meaningful impact, etc. In short, it may be said that the operation of those donor-agency-promoted programmes largely bypassed the universities in spite of their traditional role and ignored the more fundamental role of the universities in the social and technological development process.

Some of the countries in the region have established donor consultative committees and inter-ministerial bodies for creating inter-agency and inter-sectoral co-operation, but they are not adequately supported by inter-institutional consultative mechanisms. There is a need for a co-operative and concerted effort by the UN and international and bilateral agencies involved in various programmes concerned with literacy, primary education and continuing education. Included in such an effort is the necessity of calling upon the HEIs to play the role for which they have the competence.

Recognition of Role: The higher education institutions, if directly involved through their research, training and follow up operational activities, could help to identify effectively the needed emphasis and adjustments required over time. One may recall that the universities in developed countries, either singly or as a consortium, have played a significant role in conceptualizing, formulating and implementing similar programmes within their respective country, as well as abroad, at the behest of their Governments or international agencies. However, this new role of the university has been established recognized, nor augmented by the national governments or the donors in most of the

countries of the region. Recognition of such a role by the universities themselves and encouragement of such a role for HEIs by the national governments could create a capacity in a country which the donors and the government could use to their benefit. EFA is such an area.

Locally Based Competence: Interagency co-operation can help augment the capacity of the higher education subsector, imbibe in them a culture of public purpose, and in turn be helped with locally available competence which helps to reduce cost of such endeavours leaving behind an established institutional base to carry forward the work. Such an approach of co-operation amongst the donor agencies, as well as between them and HEIs could result in a spin off, augmenting the local NGO capacities as well. Merely having a NGO consultative forum at the national level in a country with high incidence of literacy performs half the job. The NGOs themselves need to be strengthened and this can be achieved also in the context of many of the developing countries in the region, through NGO-HEI interaction in formulating plans of action, involvement in experimental work, appraisal of projects and evaluation of impact.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Conference on the Role of Higher Education in Promoting Education for All has recognized the potential that exists, as well as the importance of harmonizing this potential for the achievement of EFA. This is not only because sound basic education is fundamental to strengthening higher levels of education, but also because the higher education system, being a part of the greater socio-economic system, has the power to contribute meaningfully towards achieving education for all.

The conference felt that HEIs could make contributions in the following areas to achieve EFA:

a) The higher education system should continuously attempt to improve the methodology and content of **teacher training** in order to increase an effectiveness of the teaching/learning process at the grassroots level.

b) The higher education institutions should be engaged in continuous analysis of the **contents of curricula** with regard to EFA, their relevance, taking into consideration the differentiated basic learning needs of different groups, and their contribution to the dynamics of development and change.

c) The higher education institutions could directly get involved and devise institutional linkages for training

"barefoot literacy workers" which would be required to achieve EFA within a time-limit in those countries of the region with critical problems of illiteracy. The use of the facilities of open university and distance education for community level workers would be helpful indeed.

d) The EFA programme has to be cost-effective. One of the pre-conditions for a cost-effective approach is managerial competence in harmonizing and using resources. The HEIs should take onto themselves the task of developing **management manuals** for EFA programmes and devise programmes for management personnel involved in EFA. For this, inter institutional co-operation and supportive facilities and resources need to be established.

e) In order to be able to participate effectively in the EFA programmes, the HEIs would require a systemic preparedness which calls for an **adjustment of the traditional policies** with respect to research and teaching. Accommodation of field work for EFA within the curricula and schedule of the faculty, along with allocation of other resources, may be required.

f) Each higher education institution could constitute an EFA group, drawing people from various disciplines with relevant expertise so as to work on basic **learning packages**, including tools and contents. Such a group should have the commitment and competence to carry forward the task, meaningfully and wherever feasible in an innovative manner. They should not hesitate to experiment with alternatives where such experiments are likely to contribute towards more effective approaches to EFA.

g) Some universities have **departments of adult education or centres for continuing education.** It is important to see that these departments do not become stereotyped or function in isolation. They should be flexible enough to accommodate new knowledge, undertake work in new areas, or initiate and promote evaluative research.

h) Higher education institutions have to work closely with relevant organizations to identify psycho-social obstacles to achieving EFA. Such an endeavour could include **awareness raising activities** through the media, consciousness raising activities with influential personalities in potential co-operative agencies, and stimulating interaction with policy-makers.

i) Higher education institutions, in order to be able to carry out their social responsibility with respect to EFA must activate their function of **research** and development. This would encompass research for assessing a community's perception of basic learning needs, for knowing the capacity of the delivery system, for desiring appropriate pedagogical methodology, for collection and collation of relevant data, and for making impact assessment. Pilot research projects in these areas would be helpful.

j) Creation of a database and updating it continuously through participation of collaborating grassroots level institutions/individuals is considered essential for monitoring progression towards EFA. The HEI can not only devise systems for collection, storage and analysis of such data but they should be the main participant in this respect, a conclusion confirmed by the experiences of some of the universities in the region. Being a depository of relevant databases, with

a capacity to update it, the HEI is in a position to simulate alternative programmes, to devise and suggest corrective alternatives, and amend programmes as and when necessary.

k) National consultative groups including people from multi-sectoral units in HEIs and other institutions and organizations could help the exchange of experience at the national level, identify priority action programmes and examine alternative approaches for selecting the cost-effective programmes.

l) Networking of national institutions is considered essential to avoid unnecessary duplication, to stimulate each other with experiences of successes and failures, and to co-ordinate the action programmes in order to reach the groups in danger of being left-out, if any.

m) Sub-regions have many commonalities, some have achieved more successes than others and some have richer experiences than others. **Sub-regional networking** is considered helpful in terms of exchanging expertise, experience and materials. There is even a possibility of mounting joint research projects and of undertaking comparative studies which illuminate achievements or identify causes of slow progress. Interaction amongst the activists, policy-makers and implementors helps to generate a synergic impact on regional and national programmes.

n) Regional networking of institutions and policy makers is considered necessary to identify regional studies, particularly with respect to policy alternatives and exchange of experiences under different socio-political conditions, which promote partnership and exchange of effective curricula, training methodology, creation

of databases, and methodologies for impact analysis. Since countries of the region are at different levels of development, such co-operative ventures would help to bring out commonalities and contrasting endeavours to create better understanding and sharing of the socially-oriented intellectual endeavour.

o) The **open university** model, with its emphasis on open access and alternative modes of delivery – such as distance education – is highly appropriate to furthering continuing education, adult literacy and primary education programmes. Where feasible and appropriate, the open university model should be extended. Also, traditional universities should consider creating departments based on aspects of the open university philosophy, such as education at a distance. The networking of open universities in the region is in place. The open universities within the national context could take the lead in sensitizing HEIs and interact meaningfully with them in augmenting the potential of HEIs in making contribution for achieving EFA.

p) In order to be able to provide effective service for the achievement of EFA, the HEIs might themselves need substantial adjustment of their own programmes and administration, including those which augment the **management competencies** of these institutions. Support for such effort in the context of EFA needs to be assured for optimal impact.

q) Since NGOs have been active at community level and some of them have literacy programmes based on learning needs, it is felt that interactions amongst NGOs themselves and creation of a consultative **HEI-**

NGO forum would enhance the capacities of both the NGO's and higher education institutions.

r) The UN and international agencies are encouraging the developing countries to prepare their **national action plan** for which technical assistance may be made available. Clearly, higher education institutions in a country have the capacity, particularly with regard to research on relevant issues, to make a significant contribution to the formulation of national action plans. But higher education institutions must put themselves forward with demonstrable capacity as a contributor to national action plans, and concerned agencies should also seek out such institutional capacities and expertise.

s) **Inter-agency co-operation** for EFA was considered by the conference as essential. The agencies in the past (in the perspective of their programmes) had launched segmented and limited approaches to the use of the education sector facilities. For EFA, it is the considered opinion that an integrated approach would be more logical and cost-effective.

t) International agencies should support higher education institutions for national, regional and sub-regional projects, including research activities, which promote education for all. This should encompass both existing and new projects.

ANNEXES

Annex I

WELCOME ADDRESS

by Mr. Hedayat Ahmed, Director
UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia
and the Pacific

Prof. Wichit Srisa-an,
Mr. Fabrizio Ossella,
Distinguished participants and Observers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of UNESCO, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to this regional conference on the role of higher education in promoting education for all. We are grateful to the Member States for responding to our initiative positively. This is reflected in the number of senior educators and administrators who have assembled here to participate in the week-long deliberations.

We are deeply honoured that Prof. Wichit Srisa-an is with us. Prof. Wichit is an architect of the project under which the conference is taking place. He was among a group of eminent personalities who met in Singapore nine years ago under the auspices of UNESCO to design UNESCO's higher education programme for this region. Since then we have received constant support and professional guidance from him as the Chairman of

the Consortium on Innovation, President of the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University and in his present capacity as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of University Affairs, Thailand.

PROAP's regional higher education programme could not be what it is today without generous funding support from UNDP. Mr. Fabrizio Ossella, Deputy Regional Representative of UNDP, Bangkok has kindly joined us at this opening session. I have no doubt that the conference will immensely benefit from his observations. We do not see the present conference only as a round-up meeting of the current UNDP supported project in a literal sense but more optimistically we believe this could perhaps be the starting point for another phase of expanded UNDP-UNESCO co-operation in the field of higher education.

Education has been a condition for the progress of human society since the dawn of civilization. Education acts as the most powerful liberating force and its influence is all pervasive on our life. Education is universally recognized as an inherent right of an individual and to provide education to all its citizens in the undeniable responsibility of the modern human society. The World Conference on Education for All sponsored jointly by UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and World Bank and held last March is essentially a reassertion of world's faith in and renewed commitment to education as the pre-condition for human welfare and development. The World Declaration that emerged at the end of the Conference says " ... education is a fundamental right for all people, women and men, of all ages, throughout our world" and "that education can help ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally sound world, while simultaneously contributing to social, economic and cultural progress, tolerance and international co-operation ...".

One cannot prescribe what would be the limit to learning or the ceiling of education as this would depend on individual ability and the circumstances a person happens to be in. But there

can be no argument that education to a certain level must be assured for everybody irrespective of where he or she may come from. The World Declaration defines this minimum and the purpose of education for all as meeting the "basic learning needs". This means that "any person – child, youth and adult – should be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their learning needs." Basic education in this sense is seen as "more than an end in itself"; it constitutes the foundation for life-long learning and human development on which further levels and types of education and training may systematically build.

To these objectives, the World Declaration has recognized that primary education must be universal. The basic learning needs of youths and adults should be met through a variety of options and delivery systems in which literacy programme is indispensable. Other needs can be served by appropriate skills training and through formal and non-formal education on various aspects affecting the quality of our life such as health, population and other social issues.

If I may recount from the World Conference document, more than 100 million children in the world today have no access to primary schooling. More than 960 million adults, of whom 700 million are in Asia-Pacific region, are illiterate and more than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programmes. Realizing the magnitude and the daunting nature of the problems of ensuring education to the teeming millions the World Declaration has called for concerted efforts and "strengthening partnership". It emphasizes that "national, regional and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all, but they cannot be expected to supply every human, financial and organizational requirements for this task. New and revitalized partnerships at all levels will be necessary including partnerships among all sub-sec-

tors and forms of education, recognizing the special role of teachers and that of administrators and other educational personnel".

Against this backdrop the present conference has been planned. The conference is the last major activity to be organized under UNDP supported project RAS/86/171 – Regional Co-operation in Higher Education for Development in Asia and the Pacific which is due to be completed by the end of this year. The conference was not originally scheduled in the work plan of the project but the World Conference has provided impetus for it. Aside from this, in defining the global objectives and strategies in the context of education for the twenty-first century, the Third Medium-Term Plan of UNESCO (1990-1995) has emphasized that higher education institutions being at the apex of the educational system have a much greater role to play in the development of other levels of education.

As we have tried to explain in the Prospectus, one must not see higher education just as only another tier in the education system. It is the vital human capital producing sector and research and development sector for the economy and is so for the education system as a whole. Particularly because of the interactive nature of the education sub-sectors in the context of education for all embracing primary education, literacy and continuing education the universities and other institutions of higher learning have a significant contribution to make. It is therefore important to examine what these institutions are currently doing, what they are capable of doing because of their critical mass of capacity and how they can fully mobilize this capacity towards achieving the goal of education for all.

Higher education systems in many countries in Asia and the Pacific are at the cross roads of change as they are adjusting their structures and programmes to meet the new demands placed on them. The main challenge for most of the systems is to

cope with the increasing number of students accompanying change in the demographic and social composition of student population. There is a growing concern about the quality of higher education and its relevance to national development. The structural diversifications and innovations in curriculum development units have been slow. On the other hand there has been surplus of university graduates particularly in arts and humanities in terms of demands from the labour market. However, the part of the role that universities and colleges can play in national development by improvement of the education system specifically in the context of universalization of primary education and reduction of illiteracy is not fully effected. Their involvement by and large have remained marginal and of routine nature.

Nevertheless, examples of innovative projects are to be found in the region. The University of Bombay (India), under its "each one teach one" project has involved a large number of students in an effort to reduce literacy. Each student is expected to teach one adult illiterate for five months, 3-4 days a week. Between 1982 and 1989 about 1,100 students from 35 colleges have participated in the project. Since 1988, the university has declared it compulsory for all its students to participate in the university's mass programme of functional literacy.

The Allama Iqbal Open University (Pakistan) has extensive experience in providing training to literacy workers throughout Pakistan. It has produced training kits and established many local centres to sustain and complement the training imparted through distance teaching means. Special feature of the programme is the integrated functional literacy and primary education programme for the females.

The University of Papua New Guinea plays an active role through its language and literacy programmes. The university has helped in the formation of an NGO liaison umbrella group to promote co-operation amongst NGO's.

We view this conference as a part or component of a package of interrelated and integrated activities UNESCO has undertaken in both short and long-term perspective as a follow-up to the World Conference on Education for All. UNESCO has set up an action plan for Education for All the aim of which is to "stimulate and support national initiatives to achieve education for all" – through actions at national, regional and global levels. To state briefly, during 1990-1991 UNESCO action plan will focus on training of trainers, regional research and information exchanges including inter-university research projects, regional seminars on mobilization and participation and regional status reports.

As far as this Office is concerned, the Twelfth Regional Consultation Meeting on the Asia Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) identified universal primary education as one of the three priority areas for its future programme and has stressed on a regional co-operative mechanism for promotion and support of UPE. The Second Meeting for Regional Co-ordination of APPEAL has defined strategy for regional and national actions towards eradication of illiteracy, achieving universal primary education and reinforcement of continuing education. The present conference with its specific attention to the role of higher education institutions will seek to identify and elaborate how these institutions can co-operate, supplement, reinforce and enhance quality of the actions already envisaged and add new visions to them.

The prospectus for the conference has identified broad themes in order to provide a framework for discussion. Undoubtedly others will be added to them as the conference proceeds. While these issues are conceptualized in a regional context, we must recognize the wide variations that are to be found in this vast and diverse region in terms of the mandate, structure and capacity of the higher education institutions vis-a-vis the level of achieve-

ments in the fields of literacy and primary education. The nature and intensity of the problems encountered by the countries will vary calling for interventions of different kinds. For example, there is a cluster of countries where the literacy rates are very low (between 24 and 49 per cent) and where much is yet to be done to bring about real change and improvement in the primary education systems. It is for these countries that the contributions from higher education institutions could be very critical. They certainly can make substantial impacts by consciously articulated programme actions and systematic follow up.

Our experience has led us to believe that regional/sub-regional co-operation among institutions of known ability and interest could prove to be of immense support to national and local initiatives as well as to other regional groups by way of sharing their expertise and collective wisdom. While co-operation may take place in a variety of ways and forms, distinct opportunities seem to exist for joint efforts in research and establishment of data network within comparative frameworks, establishment of new training courses, development of instructional and reading materials and in initiating experimental projects of diverse nature. In recent years mobility of scholars, students and other higher education personnel has considerably increased and numerous bilateral and multilateral projects have been undertaken by universities and research institutions in the region. If it may be mentioned, PROAP's regional programme in higher education which operates through a network of 70 institutions, alone has been instrumental in bringing together some 1,500 teachers and administrators at meetings, seminars, workshops and training courses at the national and regional levels during the course of the past seven years. A distance education regional resource centre and an association of Asian Open universities have been set up. Specially the open universities are in a unique position to contribute to certain areas because of their flexibility and innovativeness in programme designing and multiple

delivery systems. Similarly APEID has a network of 200 institutions in 26 countries. These are mentioned only as indicative of the potential which is readily available let alone many others who would be equally willing to participate in any meaningful national or regional activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we attach great importance to this conference. What the conference recommends and observes will have a significant bearing on our future policy and plan to accelerate the contribution of higher education to improve primary education and make substantial inroads in reducing the heavy incidence of illiteracy. We look forward to working with you during the week and the services of this Office are at your disposal.

Thanking you.

Annex II

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

by Professor Dr. Wichit Srisa-an
Permanent Secretary of State for Higher Education
Ministry of University Affairs

Mr. Hedayat Ahmed, Director, UNESCO PROAP,
Mr. Ossella, UNDP Deputy Regional Representative,
Distinguished Delegates,
Dear Colleagues,

It is certainly a great honour and privilege for me to be invited to inaugurate this unique regional conference. I believe that his occasion marks an initiative effort to formally address higher education with respect to basic learning needs particularly literacy, primary education and continuing education.

All of us here must have witnessed that our higher education systems in modern society and global community continue to drive for achieving equity, efficiency, academic excellence and international co-operations – even to the verge of internationalization. However, this sub-sector of education unceasingly devotes to providing human resource for other educational sub-sectors, not to mention its roles on research and development for the economy and for the education systems as a whole.

Higher education has multi-dimensional characteristics. It is the human capital producing sector. It provides trained manpower inputs for all other sub-sectors of education as well as any sector of the economy. It is also a research and development sector for the education system as a whole in as much as for the nation's economy. Higher education institutions also play strong consultative role for all other level of education system in teaching material development, improvement of pedagogical methodology, design of curricula, adaptation of educational technology and the likes.

Recognizing the concerns and the commitments of our world community as stated in the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to guide the implementation of the Declaration, multi-sectoral strategies would be required to ensure human development to reach the entire population across economic strata and geographical location.

Attempts have been made quite successfully, over a decade by now, to bring learning to larger portion of our population through the new delivery system of distance education and innovative mechanism of open higher education institutions. Careful selection and utilization of modern communication technology help speed up our concept of education for all. This concept has long been in our hearts. The World Conference of Education for All early this year helped formalize the acceptance and commitment of most nations of the world community.

Regional effort has also been made since 1981 under the UNESCO Co-operative Programme in Higher Education for Development. Three consortia were initiated at that time. On international level, linkage programme has been accelerating to gain momentum in terms of multi-institutional, bilateral and multilateral co-operation.

I am very happy to learn that UNESCO has unceasingly determined to generate regional understanding and co-operations in higher education development. Dear colleagues, I do have the confidence that your thrusts and deliberations on the major issues of higher education as a facet of Education for All to be discussed over this week will have great impacts on future actions to bring education to everyone in all corners of a country, a region or the whole world.

Education is to be regarded as One and One for All. Education for All is our target and All for Education is our determination.

The time is now auspicious and may I declare this Conference to convene and proceed fruitfully.

Thank you.

Annex III

ADDRESS

by Mr. Fabrizio Ossella, Deputy Regional Representative
United Nations Development Programme

Dr. Wichit Srisa-an, Permanent Secretary
of the Ministry of University Affairs,
Mr. Ahmed, Director of UNESCO's Principal Regional Office,
Colleagues from the UN System, Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address this meeting and share with you some thoughts on the important subject of education.

As you may already know, from its inception UNDP has been committed to promoting education for all. A large percentage of UNDP resources have been allocated to education and human resources development, through national, regional and global projects.

This is quite natural. Development is primarily the development of people. Enabling people to pursue their well being in accordance with their own wishes and capacities must be the focal point of development. Macro economic strategies are necessary but not sufficient to bring about development for all.

Literacy and education are the two essential factors, without which development is not feasible.

It goes also without saying that higher education has a major role to play and shares responsibility in making education accessible to all and in identifying the ever changing needs of basic education.

With regard to education delivery systems, it is clear that the traditional ones are grossly inadequate to meet the challenge. Asia is certainly proof of this fact. Although many Asian countries have made tremendous advances in the economic and technical fields, progress in fighting illiteracy has not kept pace with them. Asia still harbours the largest number of illiterates than any other continent on the globe. The number of Asian illiterates is greater than the population of the entire African continent.

Despite the encouraging economic indicators recorded in many countries, the pertaining high rate of illiteracy and inadequate education is a matter of grave concern. New ways must be found to meet the right of the people to have access to education. Access to knowledge widens people's choices and enables them to improve their standards of living.

For too many centuries large numbers of people have been dependent on minority leaderships for their living conditions. The eighties have witnessed great changes in this field and more open and more participatory systems are being introduced all over. Even the more autocratic regimes are opening up.

We must all work jointly to seize this opportunity and turn the wind of change into a sweeping tornado that will make access to literacy and education a reality for all. To achieve this objective, though, new avenues and new systems must be sought.

In this age of technology and telecommunications new avenues are becoming feasible. Her is where higher education will have to play a determinant role. It is necessary to go a step

further from merely continuing to advocate the need to provide access to education to all. Now it is a matter of applying new technologies to make education affordable and to work on the content of the curricula and make them more relevant and in line with the development pattern of each country.

You already know this and practise it. Nevertheless, I believe it appropriate to repeat here that curricula must be tailored to the needs of each country. I wish to go even further, they must be tailored to meet the needs of various groups when people's of the same country face varying levels of development and diverse environmental conditions.

Going back to a point that I have raised earlier, the cost of education, I believe that new audio-visual technologies should be used to the maximum extent possible. It is not realistic nor feasible to plan for the deployment of the required numbers of good teachers to cover every settlement in the country. I am not an expert but I wish to suggest that in education we should use a system similar to the "bare foot" doctors principle. It should be feasible to appoint in each village a person as the focal point for education, a bare foot teacher, and support her/him with audio-visuals and books.

Given the cost of books, we may have to abandon the principle of providing each student with a set of books. At this stage we can only think of sharing. We should apply the principle of "village libraries" to share the books among the various students. In such a system emphasis will have to shift from the training and retraining of thousands of teachers to the production of audio-visuals to provide distant teaching and to support the "barefoot teachers".

I am sure that whenever the contents of the curricula are relevant to the perceived needs of the target people, they will respond. As said earlier, it may be necessary to set different

standards in the same country to serve the needs of disparate groups with varying development prospects.

In concluding, I wish to reiterate that I firmly believe that current systems are grossly inadequate and that the higher education system must come into the act and share the responsibility and the effort to provide access to education to all. Education is the primary key people need to improve their lives!

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to share these thoughts with you.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

AGENDA

1. Inauguration
2. Election of office bearers of the conference
3. Statement of background and objectives of the conference with reference to the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework of Action.
4. Keynote Paper.
5. Issue

   1: Interaction and interdependence of educational sector sub-systems.

      1.1: Higher education sub-system as a supplier of teachers and other trained manpower for primary education, continuing education and literacy programmes.

      1.2: Higher education and its role in the development of curricula, pedagogy, teaching materials and education technology for primary education, continuing education and literacy programmes.

6. Issue

   2: Higher education and its role in community need assessment and impact research with respect to primary education, continuing education and literacy programmes.

      2.1: Higher education and mobilization of community support for primary education, continuing education and literacy programmes.

7. Issue

   3: Higher education institutions and creation of data base for primary education, continuing education and literacy programmes.

      3.1: Higher education networking for primary education, continuing education and literacy programmes.

8. Issue

   4: Role of TCDC and inter-agency co-operation for promotion of primary education, continuing education and literacy programmes.

9. Summing up of the discussion.

10. Adoption of the Final Report of the conference.

11. Closing of the conference.

Appendix B

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

BANGLADESH	**Dr. Osman Ali** Director Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education Dhaka
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	Dr. M. Selim Specialist in Higher Education, UNESCO PROAP

Appendix C

BACKGROUND OF THE CONFERENCE

The conference has been held within three broad contexts: (1) as a round-up meeting of the UNDP supported regional higher education project RAS/86/171; (2) as a follow-up to the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs; and (3) in pursuance of UNESCO's Third Medium-Term Plan (1990-1995) and UNESCO's Approved Programme and Budget (1990-1991) under Major Programme I – Education and the Future in specific reference to sub-programme 1 – Towards Basic Education for All.

Salient Features of Regional Co-operative Programme in Higher Education

The Regional Co-operative Programme in Higher Education for Development in Asia and the Pacific aimed at promoting co-operation among institutions of higher education on matters of mutual interest has been in operation since 1983. The programme is supported by the regular budget of UNESCO and by UNDP. Seventy higher education institutions/organizations nominated by 15 Member constitutes a network which is the principal mechanism through which the programme is developed and implemented. They are further grouped into three consortia around three specific programme areas, namely: (a) innovation in higher education; (b) policy, planning and management of

higher education; and (c) special research studies on higher education.

First Phase (1983-1986): During the first phase of the programme, a good foundation for co-operation has established among a number of higher education institutions in the region. This was possible because of excellent support from the Member States and the participating institutions. Some 400 teachers and administrators from 30 different institutions in the participating countries received training and orientation in various aspects of distance education and higher education planning and management. Training occurred via regional and national seminars, training workshops, study visits and the dissemination of relevant documentation. The programme contributed to the generation of an additional knowledge base on higher education through a series of inter-country studies and national case studies.

Second Phase (1987-1990) of RAS/86/171: The second phase of the project built on the first phase. A number of major concerns relating to higher education were reflected in the project activities identified for the second phase. Some of the issues examined were: low participation rates and inequality of access to higher education; the need to improve both the quality and relevance of education and training; scarcity of resources in the face of many competing demands which confront governments; and the need to ensure that higher education institutions are contributing to national development. Particular consideration has been given to the impact of higher education institutions on development in the relatively less developed countries.

Within the above context, the second phase of the project (1987-1990) places emphasis on the following five areas of activities: (a) distance education and open university structure; (b) applied research and academic staff development; (c) women's participation in higher education; (d) management of higher education resources; and (e) documentation. Ultimately the

project activities focused on the enhancement of institutional capabilities to respond more positively to the development needs of the participating countries.

During the period some 900 higher education teachers, administrators and planners received training and orientation through regional and national training workshops and study visits. The training components consisted of a wide range of subjects, such as, use of higher education resources, computer aided management, management of distance education, counselling for women students, maintenance of laboratories and equipment, organization of programmes for academic development and universities' participation in community oriented development projects.

Activities carried out under the UNDP projects and the regular UNESCO programme are mutually supportive and interactive in view of the crucial role of higher education in development. The first phase of UNDP supported project RAS/81/013 was of four years' duration (1983 to 1986). The second phase RAS/86/171 (1987-1990) approved in 1987 as an extension of the first project is now in operation. It is due for completion at the end of 1990.

UNESCO's regular programme in 1989-1990 focussed on: the Asian Association of Open Universities, the Distance Education Regional Resource Centre, academic staff development, Regional Convention in Higher Education, and stimulation of reflections on higher education.

Salient Features of World Conference on Education for All

The World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) was held in Jomtien, Thailand from 5 to 9 March 1990. Sponsored by UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank, this was the biggest ever educational conference held in human history. At a glance, the participants included 155 delegations from UN

Member States, 33 delegations from intergovernmental organization, 125 delegations from non-governmental organizations and institutes. There were four Heads of State, one head of Government, three Deputy Heads of State, 90 Ministers of Education and 16 Ministers of other Government departments.

WCEFA had three principal objectives to:

- highlight the importance and impact of basic education, and renew commitment to make it available to all;
- forge a global consensus on a framework for action to meet the basic learning needs of children, youth and adults;
- provide a forum for sharing experiences and research results in order to invigorate ongoing and planned programmes.

The immediate outcome of WCEFA was the World Declaration on Education for All; and the Framework of Action adopted by the conference on 9 March 1990. These two sectors contained in the WCEFA Report in effect reflect global concerns and commitment and outline thoughts, principles and guidelines for future actions at the international, national and local levels to ensure an appropriate level of education for all.

The World Declaration's "expanded vision" of education for all encompasses: universalizing access and promoting equity; promotion of learning; broadening the means and scope of basic education; enhancing the environment for learning; strengthening partnership. To these objectives, the World Declaration adds the need to develop a supportive policy context, mobilize resource and strengthen international solidarity.

Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs: The Framework for Action to meet basic learning needs derives from the World Declaration on Education for All. It is intended as a

reference and guide for national governments, international organizations, bi-lateral aid agencies, NGO's and others in formulating their own plans of action. The Framework for Action suggests three broad levels of concerted activity (i) direct actions within individual countries, (ii) co-operation among groups of countries sharing certain characteristics and concerns and (iii) multilateral and bilateral co-operation in the world community. While countries are to set their own targets for 1990 in terms of various dimensions, the FA identifies principles of action which include: assessing needs and planning action; developing a supportive policy environment; designing policies, improving managerial and technological capacities; utilizing information and communication channels; building partnerships; and mobilizing resources.

At the regional level, the Framework of Action suggests exchanging information, experience and expertise and undertaking joint activities. The priority area for action at the World level is co-operation within the international context, particularly in relation to reallocation of increased resources for the education sector, enhancing national capacities and providing sustained long-term support for national and regional actions.

The FA further indicates a three stage process of implementation for the 1990s. The first stage basically calls for actions at the national levels which are to include co-ordination, monitoring and adjustment of policy, plans and implementation programmes (1990-1995). The second stage suggests that development agencies adjust their plans and increase their assistance to basic education (1996-2000). Finally, these stages should be followed by comprehensive review and evaluation of achievements at the national, regional and global levels (2000-2001).

UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, the four sponsors of the World Conference, have in close consultation and co-operation initiated priority actions to support na-

tional, regional and global efforts to achieve the goal of education for all through increased resource commitments, training programmes, research and other activities. The two major regional institutions in Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Asian Development Bank have similar commitments.

UNESCO Programme Towards Basic Education for All

Major Programmes I – Education and the Future – included in the Third Medium Term Plan of UNESCO (1990-1995), accords high priority to basic education for all. UNESCO's strategy is represented by a dual track approach designed to promote literacy and basic learning for adults on the one hand and universal primary education for children on the other. It suggests a series of interrelated actions to be undertaken at the national, regional and global levels. Within this strategy the role of higher education institutions has been recognized, particularly in the context of promoting other levels of education through training of personnel and research.

Action Plan to Follow-up on WCEFA: In the specific context of the World Conference, UNESCO has undertaken a priority programme aimed at providing support to: (1) national education for all action plans, (2) strengthening of regional co-operation, (3) co-operation, monitoring and advocacy at the world level, (4) improving the knowledge base in the improvement of learning outcomes, (5) basic education for girls and women, and (6) enhancing educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups. UNESCO has established a special fund for activities to be carried out during 1990-1991.

Activities relating to national action plans will include prototype support projects; start-up assistance to national EFA initiatives; technical assistance and training; and helping Member

States to negotiate external assistance. Strengthening of regional co-operation will emphasize training of trainers, regional research and information exchanges, regional seminars on mobilization and participation; and promoting EFA advocate in regional fora.

Activities concerning co-operation at world level will include: head of agency meetings (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank); EFA consultation groups; EFA newsletter; active media strategy; video bank in basic education; EFA monographs; and the monitoring and assessment of the project. Support to improving the knowledge base will emphasize: improved learning outcomes; basic education for women and girls; and educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups. These will be achieved through round table discussions, meetings, workshops, seminars, case studies, monographs and other publications.

UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: The Regional Office has two major programmes related to the World Conference on Education for All. These are "the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All" (APPEAL) and "The Asia Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development" (APEID).

APPEAL was launched by UNESCO on 23 February 1987. The objective of APPEAL is to facilitate national efforts through regional co-operation to: (1) achieve universal primary education, (2) eradicate illiteracy, and (3) provide continuing education to school leavers and neo-literates. Since 1987, 21 Member States have established APPEAL mechanisms with a view to accelerating their programmes and activities. The second consultative meeting of APPEAL, convened in October 1990 in pursuance of the World Declaration on Education for All, further refined the strategy and programme of action in the context of the above stated objectives.

UNESCO launched **APEID** in 1973. Since its inception, APEID has been a major UNESCO programme in the region for assisting Member States to enhance their capabilities to meet creatively and innovatively the challenges of educational development. Operating through a network of 197 associated centres in 29 Member States, its main objective is to promote awareness of the need for innovation, including the possibility for change as well as the promotion of the understanding of the processes and practices of innovation.

The twelfth consultative meeting of APEID (held in August 1990) identified universalization of primary education as one of its priority areas. The proposed areas of action for UPE which focus on disadvantaged population groups are: innovative education directed at learners' needs; review of UPE national programmes; partnership network at school and community levels, action research on UPE problems; and information networks.

Against the above background, the primary focus of the conference was on the conceptualization and articulation of the role of higher education in promoting education for all.

Regional Co-operative Programme
in Higher Education for Development
in Asia and the Pacific